

# UK Patent Application GB 2 362 242 A

(43) Date of A Publication 14.11.2001

(21) Application No 0025254.4

(22) Date of Filing 13.10.2000

(30) Priority Data

(31) 09417826

(32) 14.10.1999

(33) US

(71) Applicant(s)

International Business Machines Corporation  
(Incorporated in USA - New York)  
Armonk, New York 10504, United States of America

(72) Inventor(s)

Rabindranath Dutta  
Edwin James Hilpert Jr

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

M J Jennings  
IBM United Kingdom Limited, Intellectual Property  
Department, Hursley Park, WINCHESTER, Hampshire,  
SO21 2JN, United Kingdom

(51) INT CL<sup>7</sup>  
G06F 17/60

(52) UK CL (Edition S )  
G4A AUXF

(56) Documents Cited

WO 99/42940 A1 WO 99/34272 A2 WO 99/09508 A1  
WO 00/29995 A1 US 5875433 A

<http://www.taxware.com/znewinfo/pressrelease/99prs/worldtax.htm>, 17/05/1999, Taxware

International

<http://www.taxware.com/znewinfo/pressrelease/99prs/commonne.htm>, 29/03/1999, Taxware

International

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition S ) G4A AUXF

INT CL<sup>7</sup> G06F 17/60

Online: WPI, EPODOC, PAJ, INSPEC, COMPUTER, IEEE  
and selected internet sites

(54) Abstract Title

An e-commerce database server which provides jurisdictional information to facilitate sales by a web server

(57) A method of performing a sale of a product from an e-commerce retailer on a network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions comprising receiving from a database server 100 necessary jurisdictional information for the seller 111, 112, 113 to meet the sellers obligations in carrying out the sale of the product. The method may include the database server being updated to hold current information, which may be received from a plurality of local authority servers. The database server may be maintained by a local or reference authority. The database server may determine the relevant jurisdictional information for a product by mapping the product to a product code. The method may further include replicating the collected current information in the database server to a plurality of e-commerce servers. Jurisdictional information maintained by the database server may include tax rates, warranty information, customs duty information or restrictions on sale of a particular product in a specified jurisdiction.

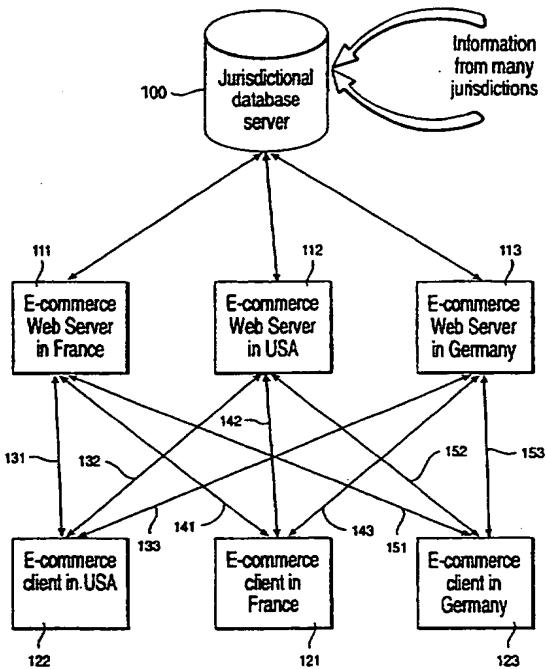


FIG. 1

GB 2 362 242 A

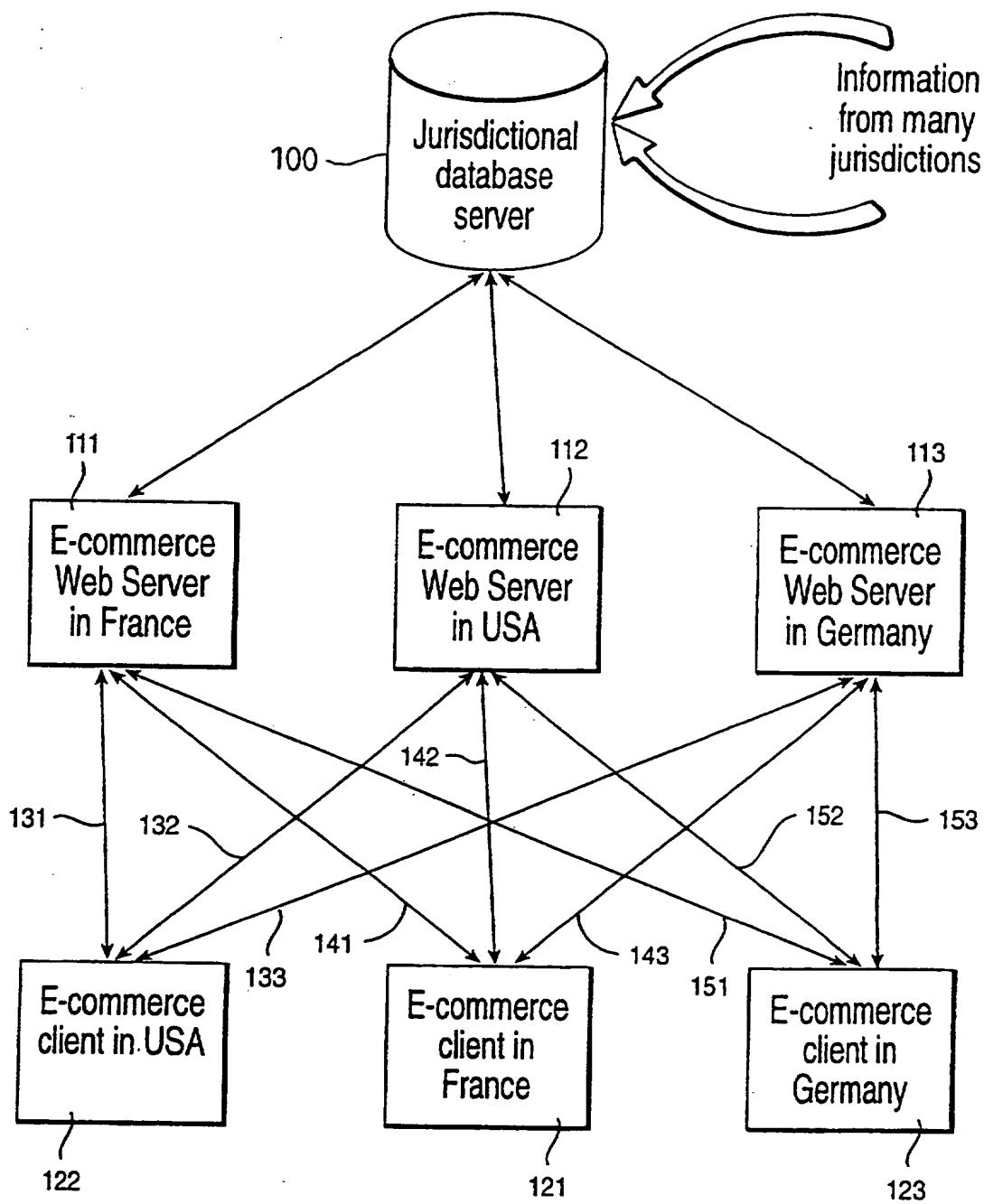


FIG. 1

Unique Product key 1024; 201  
 Product description: Mein Kamph 203

JURISDICTION	SUBJURIS DICTION- Level 1	SUBJURIS DICTION- Level 2	Value Added Tax	Customs Duty	Sales Tax	Can it be sold
Germany			N/A	N/A	N/A	No
United States	Texas $\sim$ 211	Dallas $\sim$ 213		0% $\sim$ 231	8.5% $\sim$ 229	Yes
United States	Texas $\sim$ 214	Austin $\sim$ 215		0%	8%	
United States	Florida $\sim$ 219			0%	5%	Yes
People's Republic of China			0%	40%	0%	Yes
France			15%	10%	0%	Yes

2 / 4

FIG. 2A

Unique Product Key 3045: 202  
 Product description: Best Buy "American" Champaign

JURISDICTION	SUBJURIS- DICTION- Level 1	SUBJURIS- DICTION- Level 2	Value Added Tax	Customs Duty	Sales Tax	Can it be sold
Germany			20%	10%	0%	Yes
United States	Texas	Dallas		0%	8.5%	Yes
United States	Texas	Austin		0%	8%	Yes
United States	Florida~ 220		N/A ~ 222	N/A ~ 224	N/A ~ 226	No
People's Republic of China			0%	40%	0%	Yes
France			N/A	N/A	N/A	No

FIG. 2B

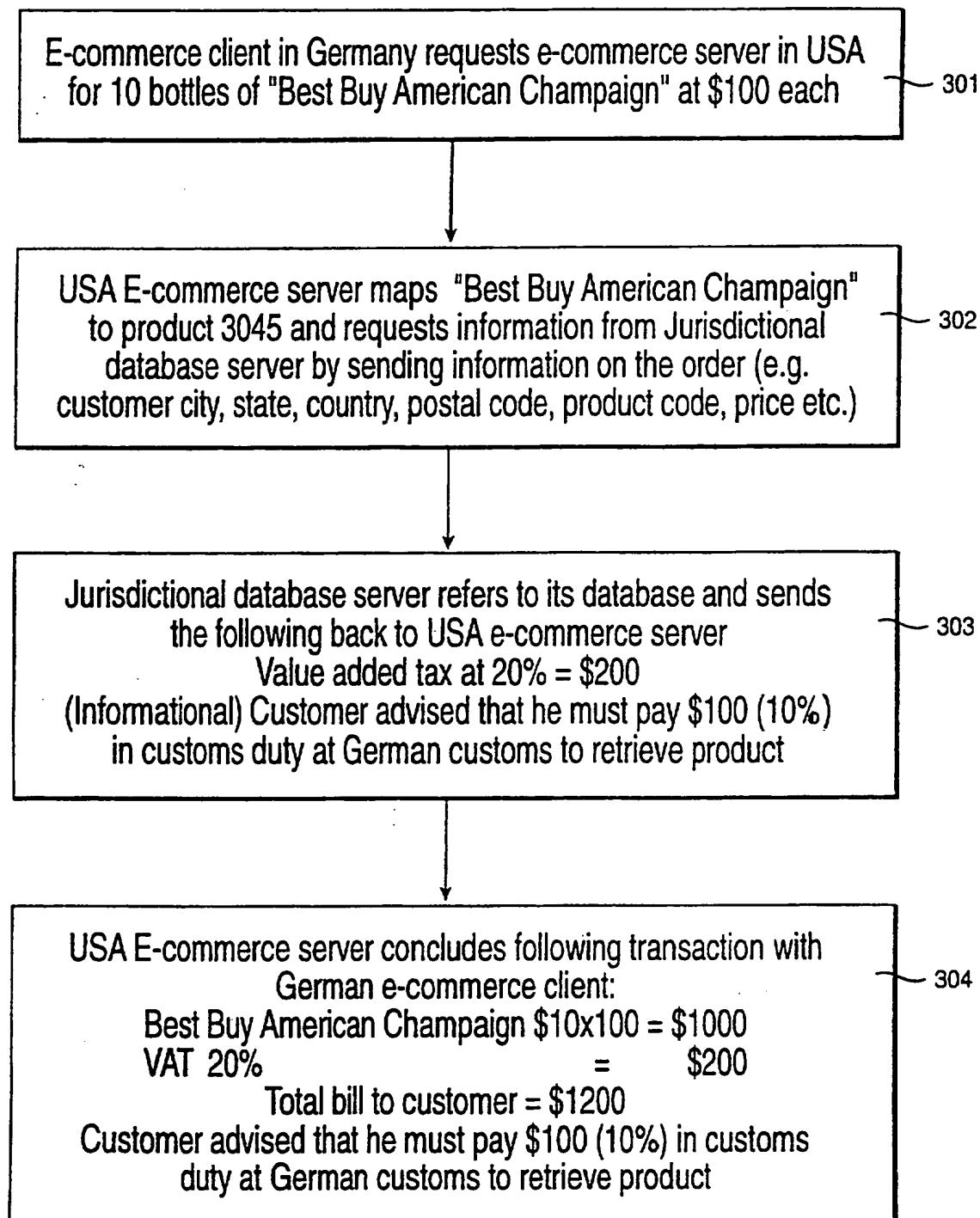


FIG. 3

A SYSTEM, METHOD, AND PROGRAM FOR ENABLING AN E-COMMERCE  
DATABASE SERVER TO PROVIDE JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION TO  
FACILITATE E-COMMERCE SALES BY A WEB SERVER

5        This invention relates to electronic commerce (e-commerce) over the Internet, and more specifically to a system, method and program within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions each having associated therewith jurisdictional type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product.

10       One of the major problems that a seller/retailer has in completing transactions over the Internet is determining the laws of the jurisdiction of the customer that govern the transaction. The recent furor about Amazon.com selling "Mein Kampf" and other banned books in Germany in 15 violation of German laws has highlighted the problem. This problem does not exist for a physical retailer where the buyer typically comes to the store to complete the transaction because the store physically exists in the same geography as the customer. The retailer knows the applicable local laws because both the retailer and the customer conduct the 20 transaction within the same jurisdiction. On the Internet, the verification of the actual identity of the buyer, or the buyer's location or place of residence, may not be possible. Merely querying the buyer for the applicable jurisdiction may not result in reliable and trustworthy information.

25       In e-commerce today, there are many small Internet retailers (and some not-so-small) who need information relating to local laws in various counties, cities, states, and countries for taxes, value added taxes (VAT), sale restrictions, other tax laws as they pertain to e-commerce sales, and, 30 in some circumstances, even information on customs and duties. This information is expensive to collect and correlate by a single retailer. A typical small web server for a village shop, that merely runs its business on a relatively small computer system, such as one running the Windows<sup>(RMS)</sup> NT operating system (available from the Microsoft Corporation), does not have 35 the capacity or the operating overhead resources to handle this type of information for every jurisdiction of each client that may visit their web site for purchase of their on-line products. The smaller e-commerce retailers find it especially difficult to apply the applicable laws to a sale to a client within a different jurisdiction. In addition, the large 40 number of retailers on the Internet magnifies the problem even more.

5 A related application, (Internal Docket Number AT9-99-574), addresses the problem of identifying the jurisdiction of a client that is accessing the e-commerce retailer's web site in order to know which proper jurisdictional laws to apply to the transaction. A copy has been placed on the file. The related application discusses in detail the specifications of an Internet-based system that attempts to track down the location of the buyer in order to apply or provide warnings of jurisdictional laws.

10 Recently, special purpose web servers for many functions have started appearing on the Internet. Typically they are referred to as "vertical portals" as opposed to general purpose "horizontal portals" like Yahoo, Lycos, Excite etc. A vertical portal is an e-commerce site that specializes in a particular industry or set of interests. Some of these new e-business models are as simple as replacing paper catalogs with 15 searchable databases, while others offer auctions and industry news. Vertical portals are a relatively new phenomenon, but Gartner group, for example, estimates that more than 300 have already sprouted and foresees as many as 100,000 by 2001. Already, vertical portal conglomerates have formed. For example, VerticalNet.com offers 30 sites including paper, food 20 services, biotechnology and automation, among others.

25 Currently there is no system or method for a typical retailer selling over the Internet to have automated access to the jurisdictional laws of many different countries and states for the purposes of completing a sale.

30 Accordingly, the invention provides a method within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions each having associated therewith jurisdictional type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product, comprising: collecting, automatically, by a reference authority database server, from each of a plurality of local authority server computer systems connected to the network, where each local authority server so collected from holds 35 information relating to a different jurisdiction within the computer network, current information from the different jurisdictions of each computer system; and sending the collected current information for a specified jurisdiction to an e-commerce server for use in the processing of a transaction for the purchase of a product carried out on behalf of an e-commerce retailer.

40 In second aspect, the invention provides a method for carrying out, in a seller's server within a computer network spanning a plurality of

jurisdictions, a sale for a product, the method comprising: receiving a request, through the computer network, for the product from a client in a given jurisdiction; mapping the product to a product code; sending the product code and the given jurisdiction to a database server; and receiving, from the database server, necessary jurisdictional information for the seller to meet the seller's obligations in carrying out the sale for the product, through the seller's server, to the client in the given jurisdiction.

In a third aspect, the invention provides a database server within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions each having associated therewith jurisdiction type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product, comprising: means for collecting, automatically, from each of a plurality of server computer systems connected to the network where each server so collected from holds information relating to a different jurisdiction within the computer network, current information from the different jurisdiction of each computer system; and means for sending the current information for a specified jurisdiction to an e-commerce server for use in the processing of a transaction for the purchase of a product carried out on behalf of an e-commerce retailer.

In a fourth aspect, the invention provides a network system having associated therewith jurisdictional type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product comprising: a database server; a plurality of e-commerce servers dispersed across a plurality of jurisdictions; a plurality of e-commerce clients dispersed across the plurality of jurisdictions, wherein any one of the plurality of e-commerce clients can connect to any one of the plurality of e-commerce servers; the database server having information stored in at least one database, for each one of the plurality of jurisdictions, relating to an amount of a tax imposed for each jurisdiction; and means for accessing the database server during a transaction between a given server and a given client for information relating to the amount of the tax in the jurisdiction of the given client.

In a fifth aspect, the invention provides a server, within a computer network, communicatively connected to a plurality of clients spanning a plurality of jurisdictions, and communicatively connected to a database server, the server for carrying out a sale for a product, said server comprising: means for receiving a request, through the computer network,

5 from a client in a given jurisdiction, for a sale of a product by the server to the client using the computer network; means for mapping the requested product to a product code; means for sending the product code and the given jurisdiction to the database server; and means for receiving, from the database server, necessary jurisdictional information for the server of a seller to meet the seller's obligations in carrying out the sale for the product, through the seller's server, to the client in the given jurisdiction.

10 In a sixth aspect, the invention provides a computer program, on a computer usable medium, for controlling a database server in a network environment, comprising: means for maintaining a database at said database server with current local transaction requirements for each of a plurality of jurisdictions; and means for sending, to a server within the network, 15 the current local transaction requirements for a specified jurisdiction responsive to a request from the server.

20 To solve the problem of the lack of jurisdictional information for a given jurisdiction of a given buyer within an e-commerce transaction, the system, method, and program of this invention preferably utilizes a special purpose web database server which provides the needed jurisdictional information to web merchants. Further preferably, a vertical portal server is integrated with the rest of the Internet for collecting and applying jurisdictional laws to electronic transactions. A single reference 25 authority collects from governments and local authorities their tax rates and the pertinent local laws.

30 In a preferred embodiment, the recognized national authority controls the jurisdictional database wherein each jurisdiction posts its laws and law changes to the national authority web server. Alternatively, the national authority database server services a request for information by going to the appropriate regional authority, i.e., state, jurisdictional database server which would contain the appropriate information for its own specific region.

35 Preferably, e-commerce merchants who want to sell to someone in a particular jurisdiction contact the reference authority for the latest information. Hence the laws of the jurisdiction are applied automatically which further facilitates e-commerce transactions and keeps transactions 40 costs down.

According to a preferred embodiment, a method is provided in support of electronic commerce within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions, the method comprising: receiving a request, from a server within the network in a process of transacting a sale of a product to a client in a given one of the plurality of jurisdictions, for information relating to the sale of the product in the given jurisdiction; servicing the request by referencing a database having information relating to transactions in a plurality of jurisdictions for specific information for the given jurisdiction; and sending the specific information to the server for use in the process of transacting the sale.

According to a preferred embodiment, a method is provided in support of electronic commerce within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions, the method comprising: receiving a request, from a client, in a given one of the jurisdictions within the network, for a purchase of a product; servicing the request by referencing a database having information relating to transactions in a plurality of jurisdictions for specific information for the given jurisdiction; and using the specific information in processing a transaction for the purchase of the product.

The advantages of preferred embodiments of the invention are further described. The jurisdictional database server of the present invention eliminates the need for each small e-business retailer to create and maintain an extensive jurisdictional database. This is a very significant advantage considering the large number of countries in the world and the varying number of separate jurisdictions within each country where each jurisdiction would have potentially a different law or regulation pertaining to each of the many different aspects of an e-commerce transaction. The jurisdictional database server is preferably able to keep the relevant information current. For instance, if a newly released book becomes banned in some jurisdictions or a tax rate is changed, which may occur frequently at any given jurisdiction within all of the jurisdictions, the jurisdictional database server can have the current information readily available to every e-commerce retailer. The ability to keep the jurisdictional information current is extremely advantageous. Furthermore, the cost of the service is, according to the preferred embodiment, relatively low, as the jurisdictional server serves many web servers all around the world and recoups its fixed costs via volume sales.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described in detail, by way of example only, and with reference to the following drawings:

5 Fig. 1 shows a jurisdictional database portal server, in relationship to other web servers on the Internet, which has a repository of information specific to different jurisdictions for the purposes of electronic transactions in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

10 Fig. 2 shows an internal structure of the jurisdictional database portal server with representative samples of the types of information that the jurisdictional database portal server stores in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

15 Fig. 3 shows a flowchart exhibiting control flow from buyer to e-commerce server to database server and back in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

20 Fig. 1 shows the jurisdictional database portal server 100 in relationship to other web Servers 111, 112, 113 on the Internet in accordance with a preferred embodiment. The database server 100 is a repository of information specific to different jurisdictions for the purposes of electronic transactions. The jurisdictional data base server 100 collects information from each of the many jurisdictions. For example, there would be an e-commerce web server in France 111, the USA 112, and Germany 113 and in each of the many other jurisdictions (not shown); and likewise, an e-commerce client in France 121, Germany 123, and the USA 122, as well as clients or potential clients in all of the other jurisdictions. 25 Any given client 121-123 can connect to any web server 111-113 in any of a number of different ways 131-133, 141-143, 151-153; but each client has access to, through any of the web servers, the jurisdictional database server 100 to receive the appropriate information.

30 Fig. 2 shows the internals of the jurisdictional database portal server 100, in accordance with a preferred embodiment. That is to say, it shows representative samples of the types of information that the jurisdictional database portal server stores. It can be seen that for each product that has a unique product key (201), the jurisdictional database 35 server stores information pertaining to various kinds of taxes to be imposed as per local laws, and whether the product can be sold by

e-commerce or not. The examples shown in Fig. 2 are for illustrative purposes only.

5 Other embodiments of the jurisdictional database server may include, but are not limited to, the following for each item or item identifier (e.g., the unique product identifier): i) any legal restrictions to the sale; ii) national, local, value added, customs, and other tax determinations including values or percentages of the sale price; iii) information as to the identity and location or contact information for whom such taxes are to be sent; iv) hazardous material shipment laws and packaging procedures; v) return policies, licensing policies, warranty laws and rights if governed by a given jurisdiction; and vi) sample electronic sales contract for the specified jurisdiction.

10

15 In addition, some of the above information may be stored in relation to the jurisdiction itself and not on a per item basis. Some of the pertinent jurisdiction information that is needed for an e-commerce transaction is independent of any specific product being sold, and is applicable across all products for a given jurisdiction. Further, some of 20 the jurisdictional information is applicable to groups of products.

25 The form or structure of the stored information can vary for different embodiments. In a preferred embodiment, the jurisdictional database server 100 is in the form of a relational database with SQL (Structured Query Language) type of queries being performed.

30 More specifically, with reference to Fig. 2, each product has a unique product key, 201, 202. Since each jurisdiction may refer to the same product differently due to differences in languages, or different manufacturers or distributors in different territories may name the same product differently; a unique product key is preferable in order to establish uniformity across all jurisdictions for each product. As such, each product in each jurisdiction is mapped to a unique product key across all jurisdictions. In the example shown in Fig. 2, the book "Mein Kamph" 35 203 is mapped to the product key "1024". Mapping products to a unique product key across all jurisdictions is a convention that can be established in any number of different ways. The generation of unique UPC codes for products is an example of just one of these ways. The generation of such a convention is not uncommon. For example, customs authorities all over the world have their customs blue book listing various products and 40 the amount of taxes associated with each product.

The structure of the jurisdictional database, according to the preferred embodiment, contains a primary jurisdiction field 205 and subjurisdiction levels 207, 209. Any number of subjurisdiction levels may be necessary. For example, to cover a primary jurisdiction such as the United States, there may be 2 subjurisdiction levels. A different level for each grouping of state 211, 214, and city 213, 215. For example, for the United States jurisdiction 217 there can be a first subjurisdiction level such as the state of Texas 211 and a second subjurisdiction level such as the city of Dallas, 213. For each jurisdiction and any corresponding subjurisdictions there can be a corresponding value added tax 221, customs duty 223, sales tax 225, or other associated information, such as whether or not such a product can be sold. For example, for product key 1024 (Mein Kamph), for the jurisdiction of Germany 227, the value added tax 221 and customs duty 223 and sales tax 225 are not applicable because that particular product can not be sold in that jurisdiction, column 204, Fig. 2. As a further example, the information associated with United States jurisdiction 217, Texas subjurisdiction level one 211, and Dallas subjurisdiction level two 213 indicates a 8.5% sales tax 229 and 0% customs duty 231 since there is typically no customs on single books coming into the United States. The data contained within the database as shown in Fig. 2 is used for illustration purposes and is not intended to reflect true data.

For a given customer having a given jurisdiction, for example if the web client is coming from Germany, and the web server is in the United States, the customs duty will depend on the product and not on the country from where it is imported. Due to international agreements, the customs duties are essentially the same regardless of which jurisdiction the product is imported from. As such the customs duty 223 is based upon the product key 201 and the receiving jurisdiction 205 and is independent of the locale of the web server of the seller where the product is coming from.

For further examples, product code 3045 may be the unique key for American Champaign. If the buyer were located in France 228, the associated data for value added tax 221, customs duty 223, sales tax 225, or other associated information would indicate, either directly or indirectly by showing null or not applicable entries, that the particular product can not be sold to a potential buyer in France. Even within the United States, there may be a state jurisdiction that does not allow interstate sales of certain products such as perhaps alcoholic beverages in

5 this example (or firearms as another example), as indicated by the data entries 222, 224, 226, for the level one subjurisdiction indication for Florida 220. Other information may be added as an applicable column in the database such as age requirements for buying alcohol or for buying other products such as videos that may have a certain rating such as "U", "PG", or "18".

10 For a given structure of the jurisdictional database 100 (Fig. 1) as has been shown and described with reference to Fig. 2 for a preferred embodiment, the structure can be replicated to each web server 111, 112, 113 (Fig. 1) in a number of ways. In one embodiment standard techniques for replication of databases are used or alternatively each web server 111, 112, 113 queries the jurisdictional database server 100 using a structured language such as the structured query language (SQL).

15 Fig. 3 is a flowchart exhibiting the control flow from an e-commerce client (i.e., buyer) to an e-commerce server (i.e., seller) to a jurisdictional database server and back down to the e-commerce client, in accordance with a preferred embodiment. Using the same example as was used with respect to Fig. 2, an e-commerce client in a given jurisdiction, such as Germany, makes a request to a server in a different jurisdiction, such as the USA, for a certain quantity of a specific product, such as Champaign, for a certain price, step 301. The e-commerce server maps the product to an unique product code, step 302. Although the mapping function may be burdensome, it minimizes the complexity of the system. The burden is manageable since each given web server preferably only sells a certain limited number of products of an entity associated with or using the given web server. For example, a given web server may only sell in the range of 200 to 500 products.

30 After mapping the requested product to its product code, the requested e-commerce web server (e.g., USA) requests information from the jurisdictional database server by sending to the jurisdictional database server certain information concerning the requested order such as the jurisdiction of the requester (buyer) including, e.g., city, state, country, postal code; and the product code of the requested product, and perhaps the price, etc., step 302.

35 With reference to step 303, Fig. 3, the jurisdictional database server references its database and sends information back to the USA e-commerce server for an e-commerce client in Germany. If the USA

5 e-commerce server sent the price to the jurisdictional database server, then the jurisdictional server calculates the value added tax at the appropriate percentage amount and sends the calculated amount back to the USA e-commerce server. Otherwise, the jurisdictional server sends the correct percentage amount back, and the USA e-commerce server calculates the amount of the tax. In addition, the jurisdictional database server sends any other information to the USA e-commerce server for further conveyance to the e-commerce client. Such information may not be part of the merchant's responsibility, or a requirement for completing the  
10 transaction, but the information would benefit the client in upholding the client's responsibilities and duties with respect to the transaction. For example, the jurisdictional database server may include such information relating to an amount to be paid by the client for customs duty in order to retrieve the product. In addition, it may include information pertaining  
15 to warranty provisions or disclaimers that are required within a given jurisdiction.

20 With reference to step 304, Fig. 3, the USA e-commerce server concludes the transaction with the German e-commerce client by presenting the correct amount that includes the applicable taxes, along with giving the client a notice about other factors that the client may be responsible for with respect to the transaction, such as paying a customs duty to the appropriate authority.

25 The preferred embodiments may be implemented as a method, system, or article of manufacture using standard programming and/or engineering techniques to produce software, firmware, hardware, or any combination thereof. The term "article of manufacture" (or alternatively, "computer program product") as used herein is intended to encompass program code, and/or one or more computer programs, and/or data files accessible from one or more computer-readable devices, carriers, or media, such as magnetic storage media, "floppy disk", CD-ROM, a file server providing access to the programs via a network transmission line, holographic unit, etc., or any other signal bearing media.  
30  
35

40 Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. For example, although preferred embodiments of the invention have been described in terms of the Internet, other network environments including but not limited to wide area networks, intranets, and dial up connectivity systems using any network protocol that provides basic data transfer mechanisms may be used.

## CLAIMS

1. A method within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions each having associated therewith jurisdictional type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product, comprising:

10 collecting, automatically, by a reference authority database server, from each of a plurality of local authority server computer systems connected to the network, where each local authority server so collected from holds information relating to a different jurisdiction within the computer network, current information from the different jurisdictions of each computer system; and

15 sending the collected current information for a specified jurisdiction to an e-commerce server for use in the processing of a transaction for the purchase of a product carried out on behalf of an e-commerce retailer.

20 2. The method of claim 1 where the sending step comprises replicating a database of the collected current information of the database server to each of a plurality of e-commerce servers carrying out transactions for e-commerce retailers.

25 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the sending step is responsive to a request by said e-commerce server carrying out transactions for said e-commerce retailer.

30 4. The method of claim 3 wherein collecting automatically keeps the current information current for any given time of the request.

35 5. The method of any of claims 1 to 4 wherein collecting automatically further comprises receiving, from each local authority server, a posting of information and changes to the information.

6. A method for carrying out, in a seller's server within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions, a sale for a product, the method comprising:

40 receiving a request, through the computer network, for the product from a client in a given jurisdiction;

mapping the product to a product code;

sending the product code and the given jurisdiction to a database server; and

5

receiving, from the database server, necessary jurisdictional information for the seller to meet the seller's obligations in carrying out the sale for the product, through the seller's server, to the client in the given jurisdiction.

10

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of receiving comprises receiving additional information for the client; and sending the additional information to the client.

15

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the additional information includes at least one of a set of restrictions or obligations on the client in relation to a purchase of the product.

20

9. A database server within a computer network spanning a plurality of jurisdictions each having associated therewith jurisdiction type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product, comprising:

25

means for collecting, automatically, from each of a plurality of server computer systems connected to the network where each server so collected from holds information relating to a different jurisdiction within the computer network, current information from the different jurisdiction of each computer system; and

30

means for sending the current information for a specified jurisdiction to an e-commerce server for use in the processing of a transaction for the purchase of a product carried out on behalf of an e-commerce retailer.

35

10. A database server of claim 9 wherein the sending means comprises means for replicating a database of the collected current information to each of a plurality of e-commerce servers carrying out transactions for e-commerce retailers.

11. The database server of claim 9 wherein the sending means is responsive to a request by said e-commerce server carrying out transactions for said e-commerce retailer.

5 12. The database server of any of claims 9 to 11 wherein the database server is controlled by a reference authority.

10 13. The database server of any of claims 9 to 11 wherein the means for collecting collects from each of the plurality of server systems wherein each server system is controlled by a local authority.

14. The database server of any of claims 9 to 13 wherein the means for collecting comprises means for receiving a posting of current information from each server.

15 15. The database server of any of claims 9 to 14 wherein the means for collecting comprises means for querying a given server within a given jurisdiction for the current information stored at said given server upon a request from a given e-commerce server for the current information of the given jurisdiction.

20 16. The database server of any of claims 9 to 15 wherein the information is at least one of a plurality of items in a set of tax rates, warranty information, customs duty information, and whether or not a given product can be sold or distributed within the jurisdiction for which the information is associated.

25 17. A network system having associated therewith jurisdictional type information for the processing of a transaction for purchase of a product comprising:

a database server;

30 35 a plurality of e-commerce servers dispersed across a plurality of jurisdictions;

a plurality of e-commerce clients dispersed across the plurality of jurisdictions, wherein any one of the plurality of e-commerce clients can connect to any one of the plurality of e-commerce servers;

the database server having information stored in at lease one database, for each one of the plurality of jurisdictions, relating to an amount of a tax imposed for each jurisdiction; and

5 means for accessing the database server during a transaction between a given server and a given client for information relating to the amount of the tax in the jurisdiction of the given client.

10 18. The network system of claim 17 wherein the means for accessing comprises a query to the database of the database server.

15 19. A server, within a computer network, communicatively connected to a plurality of clients spanning a plurality of jurisdictions, and communicatively connected to a database server, the server for carrying out a sale of a product, said server comprising:

means for receiving a request, through the computer network, from a client in a given jurisdiction, for a sale of a product by the server to the client using the computer network;

20 means for mapping the requested product to a product code;

means for sending the product code and the given jurisdiction to the database server; and

25 means for receiving, from the database server, necessary jurisdictional information for the server of a seller to meet the seller's obligations in carrying out the sale for the product, through the seller's server, to the client in the given jurisdiction.

30 20. The server of claim 19 wherein a given product in any of the plurality of jurisdictions has a same product code.

21. The server of claim 19 wherein the product code is established across 35 each jurisdiction for a same product.

22. A computer program, on a computer usable medium, for controlling a database server in a network environment, comprising:

means for maintaining a database at said database server with current local transaction requirements for each of a plurality of jurisdictions; and

5 means for sending, to a server within the network, the current local transaction requirements for a specified jurisdiction responsive to a request from the server.

23. The computer program of claim 22 wherein the database comprises

10 a jurisdiction field; and

a tax field associated with each jurisdiction field.

15 24. The storage medium of claim 23 further comprising means for correlating an identification of a given product to the jurisdiction field and an indication whether the given product can be sold in the correlated jurisdiction.

20 25. The storage medium of claim 24 further comprising a second indication of any restrictions pertaining to a sale of the given product in the jurisdiction.



Application No: GB 0025254.4  
Claims searched: 1-25

Examiner: Adam Tucker  
Date of search: 5 September 2001

**Patents Act 1977**  
**Search Report under Section 17**

**Databases searched:**

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.S): G4A AUXF

Int Cl (Ed.7): G06F 17/60

Other: Online: WPI, EPODOC, PAJ, INSPEC, COMPUTER, IEEE and selected internet sites

**Documents considered to be relevant:**

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X, P	WO00/29995 A1 (EASYCLEAR) See pp 2-3, 7-9 and abstract Fig.	1-25
A	WO99/42940 A1 (FULLER LICENSING & FINANCING) See summary of the invention pp 3-4	
X	WO99/34272 A2 (POOL) See pp 6-7 and 17-18	1, 3-9, 11-25
X	WO99/09508 A1 (IMAGING TECHNOLOGIES) See Fig. 1, page 6 lines 5-32, page 10 lines 30-34, pages 15-16,	1-25
X	US 5875433 (FRANCISCO et al.) See Figs 3(a) and 6, col 5 line 32-col 6 line 21 and col 9 lines 52-66	1, 3-9, 11-25
X	<a href="http://www.taxware.com/znewinfo/pressrelease/99prs/worltdtax.htm">http://www.taxware.com/znewinfo/pressrelease/99prs/worltdtax.htm</a> , "Tax software reduces margin of error, saves time for international transactions", Taxware International, 17/05/1999	1, 3-9, 11-25
X	<a href="http://www.taxware.com/znewinfo/pressrelease/99prs/commone.htm">http://www.taxware.com/znewinfo/pressrelease/99prs/commone.htm</a> , "Taxware International to provide software for Commerce One Marketsite.net", Taxware International, 29/03/1999	1, 3-9, 11-25

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

This Page Blank (uspto)